

Guidelines and Procedures for the Translation of Documents

INTRODUCTION

The following guidelines and procedures have been developed to provide a framework: (1) from which all written translations by HEALTH staff must be performed and (2) to be utilized when contracting with outside vendors for the development of written translations. The goal is to assist Divisions in attaining high quality products while achieving consistency among all translations. In addition, these procedures are intended to assist HEALTH with its responsibility to expediently communicate with all Rhode Islanders in the event of significant emerging threats to the public's health. For quality control purposes, the goal is to have all translations reviewed prior to their release.

For simplicity, the guidelines and procedures are divided into two: Internal Translations (IT) and External Translations (ET). IT relates to Divisions that have the resource capacity to perform in-house translations. ET relates to translations performed by a Translations vendor from the Master Price Agreement (MPA) list and to translations performed by HEALTH staff outside of the Division where the document originated. (Intra-divisional requests for translations may be accepted on a case-by-case basis, please see information under *Responsibilities of the Office of Health Communications*).

The Translation Guidelines and Procedures Committee developed these guidelines.

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1. Background

The program shall work with the designated Division person who is responsible for coordinating translations, e.g. Communications Unit. If the Division does not have a designee, the program should contact the Office of Health Communications (OHC).

2. Factors to Consider for Requesting a Translation

TIME

- **Time Sensitive**
The translator shall be contacted at least 2 weeks in advance to ensure sufficient time for translation and review. Please note that layout and production of materials will require additional time. The program shall alert the translator of time constraints in order to ensure that the translation will be completed on time. Most MPA Translations vendors offer rush services.
- **Non Time Sensitive**
Materials shall be given to the translator as early as possible to ensure sufficient time for translation and review, Please note that layout and production of materials will require additional time.

VOLUME

- **Large**
Documents of large volume shall be allotted more time for translation and review. Programs are strongly encouraged to use MPA Translations vendors for lengthy documents. The length of the document would be determined on a case-by-case basis by the communications designee from the Division.
- **Small**
Documents of small volume take less time to translate and may be done in-house or externally.

TYPE OF TRANSLATION

- **Superficial/Technical Translations:**
Technical, word for word translations (e.g. consent forms), may not require a meeting with translator. A phone conversation instructing them about the goals of the project is recommended.
- **Deep Meaning Translations:**
A meeting with the translator is required to discuss what the message conveyed should be and how to best communicate that message to the target language population.

3. Responsibilities of the Office of Health Communications

- Divisions without capacity to perform translations may request assistance from the OHC. OHC shall directly contact the translators and reviewers, and their supervisor(s) and maintain a rotating schedule of assigned staff. As needed, OHC shall provide information about MPA Translations vendors if there is no internal capacity to translate a given document (because of time constraints, work loads,

language, etc.).

- Maintain a listing of available translation vendors in the MPA and obtain feedback from the divisions/programs that may have used those.
- Maintain a glossary of standard terms, including acceptable translated terms for the department, divisions, programs, and others. Updates to this glossary shall be provided by the communications liaison from each division.
- Maintain a list of translators and reviewers, arranged by division, and the language(s) they are proficient in. This list will be periodically reviewed and updated by the OHC in conjunction with representatives from the Translations Guidelines and Procedures Committee.

4. Guidelines for HEALTH Translators and MPA Translations Vendors

- All translations shall include the names of the translator.
- The goal is to have materials translated for people who read at (or below) the sixth grade level, unless a need for an alternative reading level is demonstrated.
- Translators shall refer to the glossary of standard terms maintained by OHC prior to completing translations.
- Whenever possible, the same translator shall translate the requested products from a single program.
- Translations shall incorporate words, phraseology, and/or meanings that are understandable across the various dialects of the particular language.
- Translations shall use words, phraseology, and/or meanings that fit with the culture rather than word for word translations. The translator shall have an understanding of “untranslatable words” which represent source language concepts for which a comparable word or phrase does not exist in the target language.
- All translations shall be created in the standard word processing software used at the Department of Health, or as specified by the program.

5. Guidelines for HEALTH Reviewers and MPA Vendors Reviewing Translations

- All translations shall include the names of the reviewers.
- As appropriate, reviewers shall represent different cultures and nationalities. Whenever possible, the same reviewer shall review the multiple requested products from a single program.
- Reviewers shall refer to the glossary of standard terms maintained by the Office of Health Communications (OHC).

- The individual reviewing a translation shall be looking for accuracy between the message conveyed in the source language and what is written in the target language.
- Spelling, grammar and sentence structure shall be reviewed for mistakes and/or misrepresentation of the intended message.

6. Internal Translations

6.1. Program Responsibilities

- The program starts the process by contacting its Division's Communications Unit. Divisions without capacity for performing translations, please see Section 3.
- The program shall propose a timeline for the completion of translations, allowing adequate time for review by another individual proficient in the language of interest. All parties shall agree upon the timeline.
- The program shall provide in writing the target audience and key health messages to be conveyed. These and any other relevant issues shall be discussed with the internal translator.
- Messages to be translated shall be reviewed, corrected and revised by program staff and the translator for cultural and linguistic appropriateness. In addition, the English document shall be provided at, or below, the sixth grade level (if possible).
- The Department/program shall provide samples of previous translations and shall highlight words that need to be translated across materials in a consistent fashion, e.g. Family Health Information Line.

6.2. Responsibilities of Translators

- Translators and reviewers shall be proficient in the language used in the translation and should have a basic knowledge of health terminology and concepts. Language proficiency shall be determined by peer review.
- The work of the translator shall be thoroughly evaluated by at least one reviewer who will be responsible for checking the grammar, syntax, spelling and overall accuracy of the words and phrases used. The reviewer shall also be provided with the English version of the document.
- In the event of a disagreement between a translator and a reviewer regarding the use of a word or phraseology, a discussion with the program person shall take place in order to decide the appropriate word/phraseology to be used.

7. External Translations

7.1. Program Responsibilities

- The program starts the process by contacting its Division's Communications Unit. Divisions without capacity for performing translations, please see Section 3.
- The program shall propose a timeline for the completion of translations, allowing adequate time for review by another individual proficient in the language of interest. All parties shall agree upon the timeline.
- The program shall provide in writing the target audience and key health messages to be conveyed. These and any other relevant issues shall be discussed with the internal translator.
- The program shall provide a timeline for the completion of translations, allowing adequate time for review.
- The program shall identify key health messages of the source document and review those with the translator.
- Messages to be translated shall be reviewed by program staff and/or the translator for cultural appropriateness.
- The Department/program shall provide samples of previous translations and shall highlight words that need to be translated across materials in a consistent fashion, e.g. Family Health Information Line.
- Please see section 2. Responsibilities of the Office of Health Communications for further information.

7.2. Responsibilities of MPA Translations Vendors

- Translators shall have a comprehensive knowledge (proficiency) of the language used in the translation.
- Translators shall present samples of translation work to HEALTH in order to demonstrate their ability and expertise in both the source language and the target language of the translation.
- Translators shall have a basic knowledge of health terminology/concepts.
- Translators shall be responsible for thorough evaluation of their work by a reviewer.
- The reviewer is responsible for checking the grammar and syntax, spelling and overall accuracy of words and phrases used. The reviewer shall then compare the

translation with the English version for accuracy of words and to assure that the key health messages are conveyed appropriately.

- The reviewer shall meet with the translator to discuss any concerns or changes with translation.

7.3. Translation Submission Requirements for MPA Translations Vendors

- All translations shall be clearly labeled with the name of the person who was responsible for the primary translation and the reviewer of the work.
- All translations shall be created in the standard word processing software used at the Department of Health, or as specified by the program, and when appropriate, the font will also be included on the disc/CD. The translator shall also specify which computer software package they are using for translations.
- All final translations shall be labeled (at the bottom) with the date and the language the document is translated into.
- Upon completion of a translation, HEALTH shall review the work when there is at least one person in a division who is proficient in the language. If there is no one available who is proficient in the target language, then the translation shall be reviewed by an outside source before approving payment to the translator.

8. Resources

Translators and reviewers shall be provided with appropriate resources to perform their work. These resources include, and are not limited to:

Diccionario Médico, Glen T. Rogers, MD. McGraw-Hill Publishers,
Enciclopedia Universitaria de Términos Médicos
French/English-English/French Dictionary
Portuguese/English-English/Portuguese Dictionary
Spanish/English-English/Spanish Dictionary
Suggested: Pequeño Larrouse, Harper-Collins
Software for multi-lingual word-processing

A catalog of available multilingual materials by topic from reputable sources

9. Code Of Ethics for Translators

All translators and reviewers shall abide to the following code of ethics when performing translations

- Accuracy
- Completeness
- Conveying Cultural Frameworks
- Professionalism

Source: Best Practice Recommendations for Hospital Based Interpretation Services
Core Skills and Core Knowledge Sections, page 24.

REQUESTS FOR TRANSLATIONS AND/OR REVIEWS**DATE:** _____**SERVICE:** TRANSLATION () REVIEW () BOTH ()**CONTACT PERSON:** _____ **Extension:** _____**Division:** _____**Program:** _____**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Have you verified if this document is already available in the desired language?

Yes _____ No _____

Title of Translation: _____**Language:** From _____ To: _____**Type of Translation:** Health Education() Legal() For Website() Other() Please

Explain: _____

Estimated Reading Level of Original Document: _____**Target Audience:** _____**Key Health Message (s):** _____

Other Relevant Information: _____

Meeting between Program and Translator scheduled for: _____**Anticipated Date of Completion:** _____

According to the document, the translator on duty will provide the program with the number of hours or days necessary to complete the task. (Requests must be placed at least two weeks in advance)

FOR COMMUNICATION UNIT USE ONLY

	NAME	DATE RECEIVED	DATE COMPLETED
TRANSLATOR			
REVIEWER			
PROGRAM PERSON			N/A

Guidelines and Procedures for Translation of Documents
Flowchart

